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Chief, Organization and Methods Service

23 December 1952

Chief, General Services

Utilization of Microfilm Equipment Throughout the
Departmental Headquarters of the Agency

1. Reference the attached memorandum dated 12 November 1952 on the above subject.

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2. The study by [REDACTED] is a fine survey of the utilization of microfilm equipment from the standpoint of accounting for its use. From the standpoint of reproduction alone, the problem does not seem to be one which is abused as [REDACTED] states. However, there is the problem of having trained microfilm operators; but in view of the poor quality of microfilm being sent from overseas stations resulting in poor reproductions, it appears an improved training program of personnel going to overseas stations in microfilm technique is most essential. It is recommended that this matter be taken up with the Director of Training.

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3. We are concerned with the problem from a records management point of view as to whether the number of microfilm projects that are in existence today should continue from the standpoint of the ultimate purpose which the microfilm serves. As you and [REDACTED] realize, microfilm should only be used where either the original cannot be made permanently available, or it is desired to make a permanent record of the original and destroy the original copy. The principal difficulty in microfilming is the problem of an adequate index which permits the finding of the material on microfilm after the original has been destroyed or otherwise disposed of.

4. These are general statements and obviously there may be other applications of the microfilm activity, but by experience the records management people have found that the microfilming activity is not generally either justifiable or desirable from the standpoint of ultimate purpose. The recommendation contained in paragraph 9 is, therefore, one which should be looked into by the Records Management and Distribution Branch of this Office rather than the Printing and Reproduction Division. With your permission I would like to have a copy of [REDACTED] memorandum to be referred to [REDACTED] for investigation and appropriate action.

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